

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

290632Z Dec 05

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 001956

SIPDIS

STATE PASS DOE FOR DAS JBRODMAN AND CGAY
STATE PASS TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS AND SRENENDER
STATE PASS DOC FOR PHUPER
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS OPIC FOR CDUFFY
STATE PASS TDA FOR BTERNET
STATE PASS EXIM FOR JRICHTER
STATE PASS USTR FOR ASST USTR SLISER
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/27/2015

TAGS: [EPET](#) [EINV](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [KHLS](#) [EWWT](#) [PINR](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: ANOTHER PIPELINE EXPLOSION, SABOTAGE SUSPECTED BUT UNCONFIRMED

REF: A. LAGOS 1942

[B](#). LAGOS 1933

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for Reasons 1.4 (D & E)

Summary

[1](#). (U) As repairs continue on the pipelines ruptured in last week's attack reported ref B, a section of pipeline carrying refined product from the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) refinery in Warri, Delta State to locations elsewhere in Nigeria suffered multiple explosions on December [26](#). Regarding last week's explosions, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) reports clamping one of the pipelines feeding their Opobo terminal and consequently reducing estimated product loss to 15,000 barrels per day (BPD). Shell expects to restore full production by January 1, 2006. End Summary.

Pipeline Explosion Reported Near Warri

[2](#). (SBU) A pipeline serving NNPC's Warri refinery was damaged in an attack on December 26. This pipeline runs through Edo State and is the same line reported damaged ref [1A](#). A spokesman for the Pipelines and Products Marketing Company (PPMC) reported near simultaneous explosions on the same pipeline and a possible attempted explosion at the refinery itself. The PPMC official asserted that the series of explosions indicated sabotage. However, a security official for Halliburton told us bunkering was common along this specific pipeline and that the explosion could have been the result of this activity. The damaged pipeline delivers fuel to several northern states through PPMC pumpstations in Benin City, Edo State and Lokoja, a city near Abuja.

[3](#). (SBU) NNPC confirmed the explosion and is working with SPDC to extinguish the fire. For its part, NNPC would not comment on whether the explosions looked more like failed attempts at bunkering or targeted attacks.

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SPDC Partially Recovers from December 20 Attack
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[4](#). (SBU) SPDC public relations officers explained that, over the weekend, the company clamped a 24" pipeline pumping oil from flow stations to their Opobo terminal. The company has restored most of their operating capacity but is still reporting a production loss of 15,000 BPD (Note. A vast reduction from the roughly 180,000 BPD loss initially caused by the mishap. End Note.)

[5](#). (SBU) Still damaged are two pipelines, one serving the Opobo terminal and a second bringing oil from the terminal to the NNPC Warri refinery. SPDC representatives say the cleanup has been ongoing and they are now looking at the coming weekend to restore full operations. The force majeure declared on December 21 is still in effect.

Investigations Pending

[6](#). (C) SPDC Director of Corporate Relations Don Bonham said the company is working closely with a panel established by the Rivers State government to investigate the Opobo attack. He said a federal investigation panel has also been established but Shell has yet to begin work with that board.

The GON reportedly sent 2,000 soldiers to the Delta area to improve security around the oil facilities. Bonham observed the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and various other groups associated with arrested militant Dokubo Asari have "disassociated themselves" from the suspected attacks. (Comment. A group calling itself the Martyrs' Brigade and claiming to be an offshoot of the NDPVF published a letter on December 24 in which it took responsibility for the Opobo explosions. End Comment.) He believes another group, unaffiliated with the NDPVF, may be emerging.

17. (C) Nigerian Red Cross (NRC) Secretary General Abiodun Orebiyi confirmed NRC volunteers were at all three sites assisting in relief efforts to damaged communities and injured individuals. He said exact numbers of people affected had not been determined but predicted reliable figures by December 29. He said many affected people in the communities were hesitant to present themselves for fear of being arrested as suspects.

Comment

18. (C) Bunkering in the Delta is common and expected. However, some people believe the latest explosion and the Opobo incident were not acts of errant bunkerers but of purposeful saboteurs. NNPC officials remain silent regarding possible suspects, and local police in both Edo and Delta States are quoted as saying that the frequency of these explosions is not common but "worrisome." If more accidents of this nature occur, the weight of evidence would further tip toward the conclusion that the pipelines are being targeted. This will be a serious affront to the GON and could materially affect oil production. We are maintaining close contact with the oil companies in order to effectively monitor this situation.

BROWNE